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## Celebrate a year of victories in the armed struggle

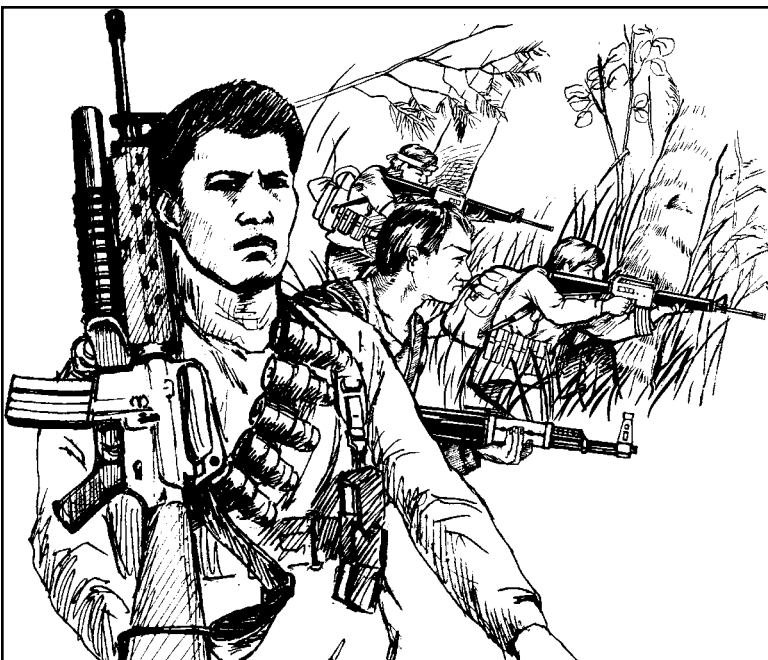
**O**n March 29, the New People's Army's 35th anniversary, let us celebrate the victories we have achieved in advancing the people's war the previous year.

The NPA has been launching more tactical offensives nationwide. It has responded well to the call of the CPP Central Committee's 11th plenum at the close of 2002 to intensify the armed struggle.

Since the latter half of last year, the NPA has launched more than one tactical offensive a week in various parts of the country. In the last few months, the NPA's tactical offensives have become even more frequent and have reverberated like thunder. Consequently, the NPA has confiscated hundreds of weapons that could arm several score platoons of Red fighters. It has resolved at one level, the dearth of arms in the NPA and the need to arm the thousands who wish to join the people's army.

One of the most celebrated tactical offensives of the previous year was the raid on the PICOP armory in Bislig, Surigao del Sur on March 21, where almost a hundred assorted firearms were confiscated. Another was the daring raid on the 52nd IB detachment in Oras, Eastern Samar on June 26, where 25 firearms were seized and 15 enemy forces killed.

The firm unity of the people and the army was the key to these victorious tactical offensives. The people's active cooperation, coordination and actual participation in the tactical offensives' various aspects are the factors that provide the NPA its undeniable advantage both in military (including intelligence and



logistics) and political terms. The strength of the NPA is magnified several times through its cooperation with the people's militia, revolutionary mass organizations and other people.

This past year, the NPA has also demonstrated an even higher grasp of military tactics, greater capability with respect to guerrilla maneuvers, firm knowledge of the terrain, expertise in combining advanced and basic military hardware and better intelligence work. This capability was achieved by systematically launching military trainings and implementing a high level of military discipline.

Thus, not only is the NPA able to ensure the victory of tactical offensives, it is now even better at carrying out counter-attacks during defensive battles in order

**Highlights  
of this issue...**

**Victorious tactical  
offensives**

**PAGE 3**

**Ka Joan: A different  
kind of fighter**

**PAGE 5**

**US intervention  
in Haiti**

**PAGE 8**

to frustrate the enemy's assaults.

On the other hand, the reactionary government and its armed forces are in a daze as they face armed attacks by the NPA from all sides. The Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police are in a constant state of dread and stupefaction.

Demoralization is spreading among the ranks of the AFP and PNP's junior officers and rank-and-file as the antipeople practices and the rampant corruption and criminality within the military bureaucracy, especially among high-ranking officials are further exposed. It further deepens in the face of increasing failures and casualties sustained by the AFP and PNP in the field of battle and their intensifying isolation from the people.

More soldiers, policemen and paramilitary forces have been bolting the AFP, PNP and CAFGU as a result of the systematic propaganda and consciousness-raising carried out by the revolutionary movement. A striking example involved a CAFGU platoon in Mindanao that surrendered its firearms to the NPA. Others have

joined the Lt. Crispin Tagamolila Movement and have eventually joined the NPA or serve as secret contacts of the revolutionary movement within the reactionary military and police. They provide valuable information, conduct propaganda among other soldiers and police forces, or procure arms and other logistics for the NPA.

The AFP and PNP's desperation grows worse in the face of the continuous advance of people's war and their mounting casualties and failures. Consequently, the enemy trains its guns and fascist wrath on the people.

More and more cases of human rights violations are being reported, including cases of "salvaging" (extrajudicial executions), illegal arrests, torture, rape, abuse of women and children, strafing, blockades and restrictions on the movement of people, among others.

The AFP resorts to the tactic of concentrating on 12 of what they consider "priority" guerrilla fronts with the aim of defeating the revolutionary forces in these areas and curbing the expansion and growth of other fronts.

However, due to its limited numbers, the AFP is forced to leave more than a hundred other guerrilla fronts wide open. The relatively fewer enemy forces in these fronts are easier targets for NPA tactical offensives.

The NPA, together with the local Party branches, people's militia and revolutionary mass organizations, are frustrating the "clear-hold-consolidate-develop" tactic and the long-term military presence in an area by RSOTs (Reengineered Special Operations Team) in the guerrilla fronts concentrated on by the enemy. The revolutionary forces expose the enemy's small, deceptive "civic projects" through vigorous propaganda work and mass actions.

Wherever there is a long-term, large-scale enemy presence in an area, there is need to take extra precaution and come up with creative ways of organizing, consolidating the Party, conducting education and launching agrarian struggles and other mass campaigns. On the other hand, this also means that there are many more targets for NPA attacks.

The NPA launches tactical offensives even as it prepares the masses and raises their militancy in order to oppose and resist through various means the anticipated military backlash against the unarmed people.

It is the task of the NPA to further advance the people's war in the coming years. The requisites for the early substage of the strategic defensive of the people's war have already been completed in the main, and the requisites for entering the middle substage already exist.

In the coming year, the NPA will certainly increase its capacity to launch more and more victorious tactical offensives as it



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## Contents

Editorial	1
Victorious tactical offensives	3
Harassment of progressive parties	4
Bicol POWs	4
Minimum age for NPA recruitment	5
Ka Joan	5
Party policy on gays	6
Revolutionary movement in Negros	7
US intervention in Haiti	8
News	10

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all-sidedly advances revolutionary work in the countryside. The NPA devotes 90% of its time to political work and 10% to military work to maintain the solid unity between the people and their army and ensure the firm political basis for advancing military work.

The NPA will surpass the victories it has achieved in the field of armed struggle. If every guerrilla front could launch one tactical offensive every three months, there will be no less than five tactical offensives launched against the AFP every week. This ensures the attainment of the targeted number of firearms seized from tactical offensives.

The NPA is in a position to surpass severalfold the number of firearms it seized from the AFP and PNP the previous year.

The NPA is improving its recruitment of Red fighters as well as the further expansion and consolidation of the Party within the NPA. We must come up with a systematic recruitment plan that would enable activists from the ranks of the revolutionary mass organizations and people's militia in the countryside to join the NPA.

Even as we strengthen support for, and recruitment into, the NPA from the countryside, we also give special emphasis to recruiting workers and educated youth, combining them with the greater number who hail from the peasantry.

By launching military trainings and holding military conferences on various levels, the NPA is able to raise its capacity both in terms of practice and theory, to advance people's war. It also systematizes the training of officers for the people's army nationwide to increase the number of Red fighters capable of leading the growing army. **AB**



## 20 firearms seized in various offensives

**T**he New People's Army (NPA) seized at least 20 firearms in various offensives launched in different parts of the Philippines this March. Six soldiers were killed and 16 enemy forces were wounded in these offensives.

The most striking of the NPA's military actions were the simultaneous attacks on a PNP station and a Philippine Army detachment in Samar on March 17; a disarming operation against plantation security guards in Compostela Valley on March 12; and a raid on the PNP station in Gabaldon, Nueva Ecija also on March 12.

**In Samar.** The NPA seized 12 firearms (two M16s, three M14s and seven .45 pistols and .38 revolvers) in an attack on the police station in San Jose de Buan town in Samar at dawn on March 17. Three PNP elements, including the police chief, were wounded in almost five hours of fighting.

Meanwhile, a soldier was wounded when Red fighters ambushed troop reinforcements from the 34th IB detachment which was stationed near the PNP headquarters. Three comrades were slain in the fighting.

**In Compostela Valley.** The armed guards of Nova Vista Plantation in Barangay Tagnanan, Mabini were not alarmed when a group of women alighted from a truck and a jeep to put up campaign posters along the wall of the plantation near the main gate at around 6:15 in the evening of March 12. It was too late when they realized that it was only a ruse by NPA Red fighters to get near their detachment.

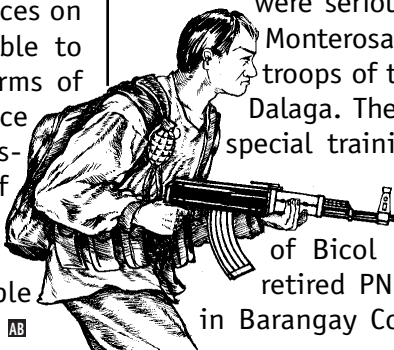
After a few moments, the main gate was opened and the detachment was suddenly under fire. The NPA seized four M16s, a Garand and a VHF radio from the five wounded guards.

Four policemen were also wounded on March 15 when the NPA encountered PNP forces pursuing them in the nearby town of Maco.

**Nueva Ecija.** Gabaldon PNP chief, Insp. Victor Bautista, and his two companions were completely taken by surprise and failed to put up any resistance when the NPA suddenly entered their headquarters and seized an M16, a 9 mm pistol, a .38 revolver, a radio transceiver and three cellphones.

**Misamis Occidental.** Four soldiers were killed and at least three were seriously wounded when guerrillas under the NPA Front Monterosa Command seized the initiative from attacking troops of the 10th IB on March 14 in Lower Bautista, Sapang Dalaga. The NPA was able to outclass the 10th IB despite the special training that the troops received from the US. A Red fighter was slain in the 45-minute firefight.

**Camarines Sur.** The Romulo Jallores Command of Bicol meted punishment on Lt. Col. Ramon Claros, a retired PNP intelligence officer. He was punished March 14 in Barangay Concepcion Pequeña, Naga City. Claros was the lead





officer in the abduction and murder of activists Nona Sta. Clara, Angelina Llenaresas, Lauro Velasquez and one other comrade in April 1989 in Sta. Cruz, Naga City. He remained active in intelligence work even during his retirement. He was also involved in the illegal drugs trade and in kidnapping-for-ransom activities.

**Bohol.** The NPA and 28th Special Forces Company of the 302nd Infantry Brigade clashed in the morning of March 14 in Sitio Casingi, Barangay San Jose, Batuan. A sergeant was hit in the chest and died instantly.

**Leyte.** An NPA platoon attacked the PNP Regional Mobile Group detachment located inside

the National Power Corp.'s Maragundong-B, Togonon power geothermal plant in Ormoc City early morning of March 10. The two policemen on guard ran in retreat.

**Tarlac.** The NPA raided the Philippine Army detachment in Barangay Matatalaib adjoining Tarlac City in the first week of March. AB

### Bayan Muna, other progressive parties harassed

**P**rogressive parties and candidates are suffering continued harassment as the election campaign heats up. Bayan Muna and other progressive parties have consistently topped surveys on the party-list elections.

The latest incident involved the abduction of Pedro Bueta, a 54-year old Anakpawis organizer from Barangay Buo, Magdalena, Laguna. According to his wife Rosita, Bueta was seized on March 13 by 15 men at around 10:30 in the morning. One of those who abducted Bueta was a CAFGU element, according to a neighbor who witnessed the incident.

At around 8 in the evening of March 10, soldiers of the Philippine Army 46th IB illegally arrested Joy Batis Paloma, a 17-year old Anakpawis organizer while she was in the house of Bernardo Batis in Barangay Hiluctugan, Carigara, Leyte. She was taken to Camp Macalpi in the same town, subjected to "tactical interrogation" by the military from March 10 and released only in the face of protests led by "Task Force Joy" of Anakpawis, the Concerned Citizens for Justice and Peace, KATUNGOD-KARAPATAN, PCPR-Eastern Visayas and Carigara town officials.

Meanwhile, Bayan Muna organizers Jacquelin Paguntalan and Rolando Fortaleza who were abducted by armed men on February 21 in Baybay, Leyte remain missing to date.

Earlier, the 71st IB illegally detained Bayan Muna coordinator Teresita Abellera of Lupao, Nueva Ecija on February 8. AB

### Arroyo regime takes hard stance on POWs

**T**he AFP has recently unleashed relentless military operations in Tinambac, Camarines Sur and nearby towns in response to the NPA's call to begin negotiations and to cease military operations to pave the way for the release of 1Lt. Ronaldo Fedelino and PFC Ronel Lemeño of the 42nd IB who were both captured by the NPA on March 1 during a tactical offensive in Tinambac.

Up to now, the Arroyo regime remains indifferent to the plight of the two soldiers. It has refused to negotiate with the NDFP peace panel to begin processing their release and has completely relinquished to the AFP the responsibility of defining policy regarding captives.

Despite pouring in an entire battalion in the area, the AFP has failed to determine the whereabouts of the two soldiers. The AFP has since been training its guns on unarmed civilians.

Six civilians have already been abducted since March 2, including Bayan Muna coordinators Isiderio de los Santos and Jaime Rodriguez. De los Santos has not been surfaced to date while the five others continue to be detained at the 42nd IB station in Barangay Mabalodbalod, Goa. Soldiers also molested a 14-year old girl from Del Carmen, Lagonoy on March 3. On the same day, soldiers also stole and slaughtered three turkeys from Rodolfo Caganda, a councilor of Barangay Del Carmen. Many other civilians were beaten up, including Gilbert Quilingan, Anakpawis coordinator of Barangay Antipolo, Tinambac and other residents of Barangay Iamon, Goa and Barangay Pinamihagan, Lagonoy.

Meanwhile, in Negros, the NPA released on March 15 Eduardo Raya, a CAFGU element captured in an attack on the 44th CAFGU Coy in Barangay Mahalang, Himamaylan on February 15. Although the people's court found him guilty of having an NPA unit encircled and raided in 2002 in Himamaylan, he was released on humanitarian grounds. Raya was simply warned and ordered to compensate those that he had harmed.

The NPA turned him over to the custody of Bishop Vicente Navarra of the Diocese of Bacolod City. AB

# CPP strictly implements 18 years as minimum age requirement for NPA recruitment

Contrary to baseless accusations by the reactionary government and its military, the New People's Army (NPA) strictly implements the minimum age policy in recruiting its members.

The NPA strictly adheres to, and respects, international humanitarian law and the rules of war regarding the prohibition of children from participating in armed conflicts.

The NPA's Basic Rules and Regulations clearly state that "Anyone who is at least 18 years of age and in good health, of whatever gender, race, nationality or religion, able to fight and ready to participate in a protracted armed struggle against reactionary state power, may become a combatant or member of a fighting unit of the New People's Army."

Those younger than 18 who desire to join the NPA are encouraged to join underground organizations of children or youth and participate in production, cultural and educational tasks and similar activities. Anyone who is at least 15 years of age may enter the NPA as a trainee or apprentice. He or she may also be assigned to a self-defense unit under a mass organization, to the militia or to other non-combat units or tasks.

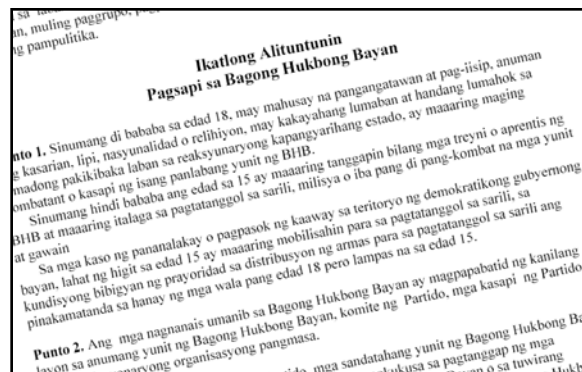
As early as 1988, the Political

Bureau of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) Central Committee (PB-CC) issued a policy forbidding the recruitment of youth under 18 years of age "as regular members or armed fighters of NPA combat units."

The CPP and the National Democratic Front of the Philippines (NDFP) then also formed a special group to study the Geneva Conventions and its protocols relating to human rights and international humanitarian law and how to achieve consistency between them and the basic principles, policies and practice of the CPP, NPA and NDFP.

The PB-CC policy of 1988 was followed up in 1999 by a memorandum from the CPP Central Committee's Executive Committee (EC-CC) addressed to all Party organs and NPA commands.

In this memorandum, the EC-CC stressed that the CPP (through the NDFP), has agreed to and complies with the Geneva Conventions and their protocols. The memo also



stated the CPP's support for the Optional Protocol on the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which forbids the recruitment of anyone under 18, even though it was then just a proposal from the International Committee of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Movement.

In the face of the reactionary government's continuing psy-war campaign, the CPP Central Committee's 11th plenum in 2002 reaffirmed the PB-CC policy of 1988 and the EC-CC memorandum of 1999.

Even as the CPP and NPA strictly implement the minimum age requirement policy for Red fighters, the revolutionary movement also recognizes the right of entire communities to defend themselves in the face of the enemy's intense brutality, which victimizes everyone, regardless of age or gender.

## Ka Joan: a different kind of Red fighter

Twenty-five year old Ka Joan is a Red fighter in a New People's Army (NPA) platoon in the southern guerrilla front of Cagayan Valley. Like other proletarian revolutionaries, he is struggling to establish a future free from oppression and exploitation. But unlike most Red fighters, his real gender isn't

what it might first seem: Ka Joan is gay.

"I have the heart of a gay," he openly says. "I am a gay revolutionary."

Ka Joan hails from a peasant family in Cagayan de Oro. He left home some thirteen years ago and worked in a nightclub in Manila,

first as a wardrobe aide to two dancers who practically adopted him. Later, he became the club's floor manager.

When Ka Joan was 17, he took a vacation in a small town in Bulacan where he met a community organizer. After a few months, he quit his job to become a full-time urban



poor organizer. "I thought it was necessary for me to do something for the people and my fellow gays so that they could fight for their rights."

After several more months, Ka Joan was tasked to help organize the urban poor in a city in Cagayan Valley. "The masses there welcomed me very warmly," he recalls. There was still no youth organization in the city, so he was tasked to start organizing the youth there. Not long afterward, they established a chapter of the Kabataang Makabayan (KM), aside from legal youth organizations.

Ka Joan entered a guerrilla front for the first time to celebrate the KM's anniversary in November 2002. He was encouraged to return by December for the anniversary celebration of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) because of the NPA's pro-people politics and practice that he had witnessed. In the midst of invitations from comrades and stirring revolutionary songs, Ka Joan chose the life of a full-time guerrilla: "After seeing the masses' life and struggle, it became easy for me to make that decision."

**A fighter like, and unlike, any other.** Ka Joan has been with the NPA for over a year now. He is their squad's supply officer, the vice team leader, and an occasional medic. His unit actively launches tactical offensives. He has carried out his responsibilities well in these offensives and has developed his capabilities as a Red fighter.

According to Ka Joan, he has been open about his being gay since his childhood. "My family loved me very much. Even my father loved me. He always said that 'no matter what his gender is, he is still my child.'"

At a young age, Ka Joan already showed how feisty he could be. "I felt hurt every time other children

teased or beat up my gay friends. Even if I wasn't the one being attacked, I'd rush to fight those who were bullying my friends."

He would also confront adults, like the parents of his gay friends who were contemptuous of their gay children. "I would tell them that gays are also people, that though their children were gay, they deserve to be respected and loved."

**Gays in the revolution.** He knows very few gays in the movement, but he also knows that this isn't because they were being discriminated against. "It was some time before I became aware of the Party's official stand with respect to gays. But even then, the policy was clear in the Party's liberating practice, as comrades actively encouraged me to work as a full-time revolutionary and warmly welcomed me when I did."

In spite of this, Ka Joan admits that there are still remnants of feudal and bourgeois outlook even within the movement. He also says that there are some male comrades who are ill at ease whenever he is around. Nevertheless, he sees the big difference in the attitude of comrades and the usual attitude of people outside the movement.

"Here, I really feel that they're striving to accept me as I am, if they haven't done so yet. Here, one feels that the masses and comrades really love you for being a revolutionary, whatever your gender preference. And I know that the Party and the revolutionary movement are waging a ceaseless struggle to eradicate any remnant of sexual discrimination and oppression within the movement and in society."



The people's army is in the process of developing practical means and regulations to promote relations among the various genders—male, female, gay and lesbian. In Ka Joan's case, she bathes separately from the men, and of course, from the women, just as men

and women not married to each other bathe separately. He is more often in the company of male comrades, but when sleeping in close quarters, he carefully makes sure that there's a little space between him and the rest, the same way that men and women not married to each other would sleep separately.

The masses cannot help but be surprised to find out that there are gays in the people's army. But because of the Party, people's army and revolutionary movement's tireless efforts in the revolutionary territories to explain policies on gender, the masses can now better understand why the NPA accepts gays and why there is no discrimination against them. According to Rey, a corn planter who mistook Ka Joan for a woman when he first met him, "He shatters the common view that gays are weak and don't do anything else but work in beauty parlors or as entertainers."

When asked about the future he looks forward to, Ka Joan responded: "Of course, I want people's democracy, and we would like to proceed to socialism because only then will real liberation for the oppressed people, including gays and lesbians exist. The Party and the revolutionary movement advance the interests of all the oppressed and all of the people, regardless of gender." AB

## Why does the CPP respect and recognize the right of individual Party members to choose their gender?

The Party opposes any kind of discrimination, oppression and exploitation in society, including discrimination and the denial of rights and opportunities based on gender preference. Joining the Party is premised on one's recognition and advance of Marxism-Leninism-Maoism as the ideology of the proletariat, of the Communist Party of the Philippines' constitution and on one's readiness to wage revolution. There is no reason for the Party to refuse anyone who fulfills these requirements simply because of gender preference.

Nevertheless, it is the Party's principles and guidelines that govern the personal lives of Communists. Therefore, like other Party members, it is appropriate for any Party member who has chosen a different gender to conduct his or her personal relations in accordance with these principles and guidelines. The basic principles and guidelines on marriage within the Party are applicable in their case.

We must consciously combat sectarian views and attitudes, prejudicial stances and mindsets on the personalities of individuals who have different gender preferences. AB

*(From "Some Explanations Regarding the Guidelines on Marriage Within the Party" and the "Guidelines on Marriage Within the Party" as amended in 1998 by the CPP Central Committee's Executive Committee in accordance with amendments by the Central Committee's Tenth Plenum.)*



## Revolutionary movement in Negros advances



The revolutionary movement in Negros, the country's fourth largest island, is once again reaping victories despite the problems, shortcomings and weaknesses in ideology, politics and organization that it faces.

From only three barrios initially recovered in 1994, the revolutionary movement has returned to and resumed operation in over half of Negros' total of 57 towns and cities. Guerrilla fronts have been successfully built in the northern, central and southern parts of the island. They cover many barrios in vast plains and mountainous areas.

A growing number of people are joining the revolutionary movement and volunteering to be organizers in the countryside or fighters in the New People's Army. The number of Red fighters has grown from the barely 1% that remained of the NPA's original strength after renegades deceived the revolutionary forces

in the island and prevented them from making contact with forces loyal to the Second Great Rectification Movement (SGRM).

**Breadth and depth.** Guided by the lessons drawn from the SGRM and the summing-up of particular experiences, the Party in Negros resolutely and creatively launched extensive and intensive guerrilla warfare based on an ever-widening and ever-deepening mass base. In 2003, the NPA launched several notable tactical offensives, alongside the revitalization of the mass movement.

The Party and the NPA have also successfully preserved themselves. In the face of intensive enemy offensives, the NPA is capable of launching counter-offensives against the enemy, such as what occurred in Guihulngan, Negros Oriental and Kabankalan City on August 17, 2003.

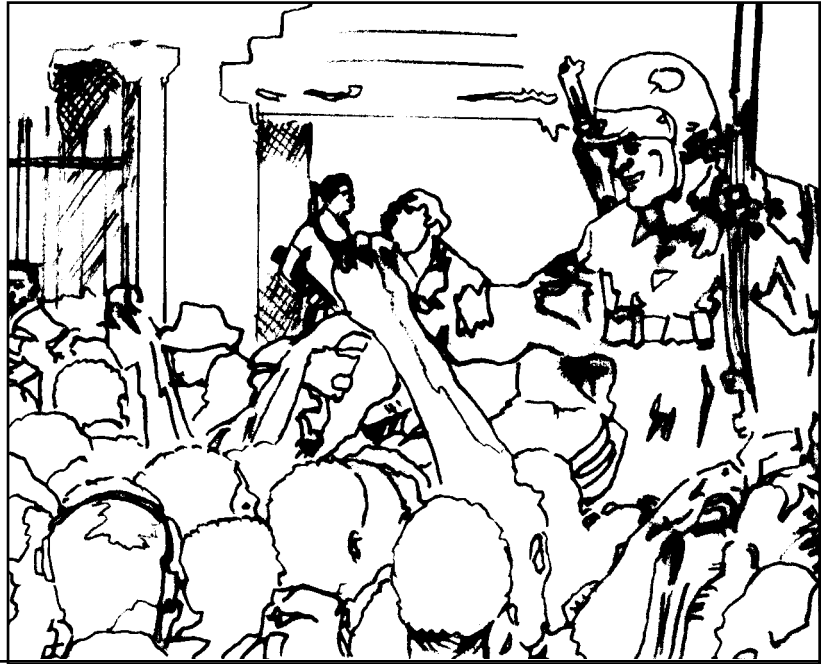
Full-fledged peasant associa-  
"Negros", continued on page 8

# Heightened US intervention in Haiti

**U**S imperialism unbridledly violates the sovereignty of nations, especially those in the Americas which it considers its own backyard. The US has long arrogated the right to intervene in any country within the American continents.

One of the highlights of last month's news was the latest case of direct US military intervention in Haiti, a small country in the Caribbean sea, some 1,150 kilometers south-east of the US. On February 29, the US forced Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide to resign and spirited him out of the country. Subsequently, US military forces occupied the presidential palace and other strategic places in Haiti and now act as the country's main armed force and police.

*"Haiti", continued on page 9*



*from page 7*

tions have also been established in a number of guerrilla fronts. They serve to reap the strength of the revolutionary organized masses under the Party's leadership. At the same time, peasants, farm workers and fisherfolk are advancing the agrarian revolution along with revolutionary socio-economic projects in the countryside. Some 5,000 families of peasants, farm workers and fisherfolk have benefited from the antifeudal struggle from July to November 2003.

In a militant and organized way, the masses likewise opposed the abuses of the military, police, the CAFGU and the RPA (a counter-revolutionary group of renegades who style themselves revolutionary). An example is the series of protest actions by about 3,000 people from Guihulngan from the end of March to April to oppose militarization by the 303rd Infantry Brigade, the PNP Special

Action Force and the special paramilitary group RPA that have wrought harm to the people in the area.

**Inspiration from the countryside.** Every victory achieved in advancing armed struggle in the countryside serves to inspire the militant, organized and growing open, legal and unarmed actions in the cities. This was demonstrated in the struggle of teachers for their Emergency Cost of Living Allowance (ECOLA), the protest actions of consumers against the high cost of electricity and water, the 5,000-strong mobilization for International Human Rights Day on December 10 in Bacolod City and the strikes launched by drivers and operators that paralyzed transportation in large parts of the island on December 8-9, 2003 and on March 1.

Cadres and activists are also being honed for organizing work in the countryside and to become NPA Red fighters. Increasingly, the

organized masses and allies have been extending varied kinds of support for the armed struggle.

In the face of the worsening crisis in the sugar industry, the Arroyo regime has taken no significant measure to alleviate the effects of plummeting sugar prices. Instead, the regime favors and protects the mango, corn and cassava plantations of Eduardo Cojuangco, and the businesses and interests of the brothers Miguel "Mike" and Ignacio "Iggy" Arroyo. (See related articles in AB's February 21, 2004 issue)

That the disadvantaged sugar planters and small sugar businessmen are open to forming alliances with peasants and farm workers against their common enemies is no longer surprising. In fact, among those who joined the rally on February 8 in Bacolod City were officials of the National Federation of Sugarcane Planters and the United Sugar Producers of the Philippines. AB



*from page 8*

In the last three years, the US colluded with the elitist opposition and armed criminals in Haiti to topple Aristide's government. The US employed various means to accomplish this objective, including imposing a trade embargo, withdrawing aid, portraying Aristide as a corrupt and inutile leader, supporting uprisings and fomenting unrest and attacks by "rebel" armed forces composed of goons and headed by criminals and murderers, and sending US military troops to directly occupy Haiti on the eve of Aristide's ouster.

Aristide is a bourgeois-nationalist who led the opposition to the fascist regime of Francois "Papa Doc" Duvalier and his son Jean Claude "Baby Doc" Duvalier. The US had supported the Duvaliers because it had relied on them to put an end to what it considered the trend of revolution and communism blazing in Latin America.

The Duvaliers were inveterate fascists. Aside from the reactionary state army, they likewise maintained a ferocious private army that killed their political opponents and sowed terror throughout the country. The Duvaliers also controlled the illegal drug trade in Haiti, one of the major transit points of smuggled narcotics (especially cocaine) into the US. The US withdrew support for the fascist dictator when the movement for change then led by Aristide gained broad support from the Haitian people.

The elitist interests of the ruling classes that supported and ben-

efited from the Duvaliers were threatened and affected by the changes that Aristide wanted to effect. They, thus sharply opposed Aristide's victory in the 1991 elections. They armed the criminals and former goons of the ousted Duvalier dictatorship and launched a coup d'état nine months after the new government assumed power.

The US withdrew Aristide and martial law reigned in Haiti. In 1994, on the orders of then US president William "Bill" Clinton, the US Army brought back Aristide and reinstalled him as president when martial law failed to douse the fires of civil war in the country. The US promised \$3 billion in aid for the rehabilitation of the economy ruined by criminal and militarist rule aside from over a century of plunder. Other imperialist countries like France also pledged to extend aid to Aristide.

When Aristide returned in 1994, he dismantled the entire military force of Haiti and all remnants of the dictatorship that ousted him. He tried to revive the country's economy and find solutions to the people's unemployment and poverty. He carried out initial steps to nationalize industries held by supporters of the Duvaliers and the martial rule period from 1991-1994. He defied the dictates of the IMF-WB to privatize remaining state assets and submit to imperialist institutions.

Aristide's reform programs alarmed the US and the ruling classes. At the prodding of the

marginalized ruling classes in Haiti, the US spread the propaganda that the reforms being carried out by Aristide were creating further chaos and backwardness in Haiti and that he deserved to be ousted.

Since George W. Bush assumed power as US president in 2001, he has withdrawn all aid to Haiti. To further bring Haiti's economy to its knees, the US dumped its surplus goods in the country. The dumping of surplus chicken from the US caused the collapse of chicken production, the only remaining significant sector of the Haitian economy. The US also armed the drug syndicates to further sow turmoil in an economy and political system already in shambles.

The US did not let up its pressure on Aristide, especially this year. On the eve of his ouster, American agents and their Haitian stooges colluded to force Aristide to resign. He was warned that the "rebels" were already at the gates of the Haitian capital of Port-au-Prince, and that they would blow up the presidential palace if he would not give up his position.

The following day, he was forcibly flown in a US airplane to the Central African Republic. Aristide immediately denounced this maneuver as political kidnapping.

Many countries, including the 15 countries of the Caribbean protested Aristide's forcible ouster by the US.

From the Central African Republic, Aristide has transferred to Jamaica, another country in the Caribbean, to lead the struggle against the US and the puppet government it has installed in Haiti. AB



## Series of transport strikes breaks out

STRIKES rocked various lines of transportation following the successful nationwide transport stoppage on March 1-2.

The workers of Sulpicio Lines, Metro Rail Transit guards as well as buses, jeeps, tricycles, pedicabs and *calesas* (horse-drawn carriages) plying routes in the entire Caraga region held strikes in March.

**Sulpicio Lines.** A five-day strike paralyzed the operation of Sulpicio Lines, Inc. (SLI), the country's second largest shipping line. Twenty-two out of Sulpicio's 27 vessels did not set sail from March 9 to 14.

The strike was launched by members of the Unyon ng mga Mandaragat sa Sulpicio Solid (UMSS)-Alliance of Nationalist Genuine Labor Organizations (ANGLO)-KMU. It was the workers' second strike in eight months.

Sulpicio's workers demanded recognition of their union, an increase in their overtime pay and food allowance and an end to other unjust labor policies. The Sulpicio management refused to negotiate with the strikers, invoking a supposed CBA with a yellow union which the workers had long repudiated.

The strike, which was launched in the ports of Manila, Iloilo, Cebu, Ormoc, Davao and Cotabato pushed through despite the return to work order issued by the Department of Labor and Employment and the violence inflicted by paid goons and police. Aside from KMU, BAYAN, Anakpawis, Bayan Muna and Anak ng Bayan supported the strike.

**MRT.** Three-hundred employees of the Vanguard Security Agency assigned to the Metro Rail Transit 3 staged a sitdown strike on March 11-12.

Earlier, they picketed to demand that the agency release a month and ten days' worth of unpaid salaries.

**Caraga Region.** Up to 98% of all vehicles in the Caraga Region stopped plying their routes on March 15 and 16 under the leadership of the Transport Federation of Caraga and the Butuan Auto Calesa Operators and Drivers Association.

They demanded a P1.50 increase in fares, a P1 rollback in oil prices and the repeal of the oil deregulation law. The strike affected all routes to the cities of Davao, Cagayan de Oro, Butuan and Surigao, the towns of Bayugan and San Francisco in Agusan del Sur and Tandag, Surigao del Sur.

## Spain's pro-US prime minister routed

THE rightist Popular Party of Jose María Aznar was routed by the Socialist Workers Party in the recently held election in Spain on March 14. Aznar's defeat came after flareup of people's anger when more than 200 died and over 1,500 were injured on March 11 in a terrorist bomb attack on a train in Madrid, the Spanish capital.

The bombing has been claimed by al-Qaeda, but the Aznar government tried to pin the blame for it on the ETA, a secessionist group that has long been waging armed struggle in Spain. It was an attempt to prevent the bombing to be seen as an act of retaliation by Islamic groups. The Aznar government was a rabid supporter of the US' war on Iraq despite strong opposition from the Spanish people. Up to 14 million protested nationwide on March 13, a day before the election.

Since the occupation of Iraq by the US and its allied forces, 11 Spanish soldiers have been killed in attacks by Iraqi guerrillas. José Rodríguez Zapatero, the country's newly elected prime minister, has promised to send home by June 30 the 1,300-strong Spanish contingent that is among the forces occupying Iraq. He also strongly denounced Aznar's pro-US policies.

With this measure, Spain is the first country to formally withdraw from the US-led coalition that attacked and is presently occupying Iraq.

## Portraits of the NPA

As a unique way of celebrating the New People's Army's (NPA) 35th anniversary, we are publishing *Pulang Mandirigma: Images of the New People's Army*, a book featuring the latest pictures from various guerrilla fronts nationwide. Aside from the pictures taken by comrade photographers, many of the photos contained in the book were contributed by comrades who took pictures with their own digital cameras and even with their cellphones.

In these pictures, Red fighters can be seen engaging in various tasks. The pictures clearly show the firm unity of the NPA and the people. Readers will bear witness to the fact that the NPA is the genuine army of the Filipino people.